

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for providing security with respect to who provided digital
2 data at what time, said method comprising the steps of:
3 performing a serially chained certification process including:
4 (a) forming a first interval certification at a first server including the server's
5 identification, the start time of an interval chain in UTC, the start time of the interval
6 in UTC, the stop time of the interval, a public key for the interval, a digital signature
7 for the interval, signed by a previous interval's private key, and a digital signature for
8 the interval, signed by the interval's private key;
9 (b) upon expiration of the first interval, destroying its private key;
10 (c) configuring a second server to request a cross-certification for a second
11 interval so that the first server is effectively requested to provide independent proof of
12 the existence of the interval (and its public key) at a point in time witnessed by the
13 first server;
14 (d) continuing steps (a), (b), and (c) for second, third, and following intervals
15 so that intervals are cross-chained with other servers to form a widely witnessed, temporal
16 web of signed intervals of time.